



ON THE CONDITION
OF OUR
SADDLE HORSES.

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JOHN A. SEAVERNS



ON
THE DETERIORATED CONDITION
OF OUR
SADDLE-HORSES:
THE
CAUSES AND THE REMEDY.

THE STATE OF OUR CAVALRY,
AND THE IMPERFECT SYSTEM UNDER WHICH THIS
FORCE AND THAT OF OUR ARMY GENERALLY
IS ADMINISTERED.

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ERRATA.

- Page 6, line 18, *for* mistakable, *read* mistakeable.
10, — 12, *for* she has now failed, *read* it has now failed.
24, — 10, *for* Goverment, *read* Government.
31, — 3, *for* lienes, *read* lieues.
31, — 13, *for* Flemcon donner *read* Tlemcon donna.
31, — 18, *for* lienes, *read* lieues.
36, — 3, *for* viendrout, *read* viendront.
48, — 6, *for* hock, scould, *read* hocks, could.

ON
THE DETERIORATED CONDITION
OF OUR
SADDLE-HORSES,
ETC.

CHAPTER I.

On the deteriorated character of our saddle-horses, and its effect on our Cavalry.

SEVERAL years ago I published a small work, in which it was stated, that unless the downward change then going on in the character of our saddle-horses was arrested, it would soon become difficult to buy a good one at any price; and this prediction has already been fulfilled. Certain at least it is, that while the demand for good saddle-horses remains great, the supply has become almost *nil*. I should not,

however, have again written on this subject, had I not lately observed the wretched quality of the horses on which our cavalry are now mounted. This has become so striking as to make it a duty to draw the attention of Government to the subject. Very many of these horses are unable to carry fourteen stones of weight, even at home, where they are well fed, and exposed to no privations, while on service they will be hard worked, exposed to great privations, and have to carry, on an average, twenty stones of weight when fully equipped for service.

The horses of the household cavalry are the best, but many are quite unequal to the weight they will have to carry on active service, having weak loins, a form incompatible with the power necessary to carry a very heavy weight. Even the chargers of the officers, though usually costing much money, are unfitted to go through a severe campaign. Most of them are well bred, but nearly all are characterised by weak forms.

The incapacity of our cavalry to carry much weight is of little consequence, so long as peace continues ; but when war arrives—and

arrive it will—a large portion of our dragoons will be dismounted after a single week's real service ; while the increased demand for horses, consequent on a war, will be met with an insufficiency in the supply unknown in the previous history of this country.

For some years past a large portion of our cavalry horses have been purchased in Ireland, but the supply there has greatly declined, owing to the farmers who bred them having emigrated.

In the report of the last Ballinasloe fair, as given in the *Globe* newspaper, I find the following paragraph :—“ The horse fair was held yesterday. Some good horses were exhibited, but the majority were rather inferior. *Both breeders and dealers concurred in stating that one-fourth the number of horses are not now produced in this country, as compared with former years.*” What the writer here calls good horses, were hunters, not calculated for the road, or coming under the head of useful saddle-horses.

A large portion, too, of the Yorkshire farmers, who till lately bred so many of our best saddle and harness-horses, have now

ceased to breed either. The reasons they assign for this is:— first, the large quantity of corn which our well-bred horses now require while growing; secondly, the difficulty, after this expense has been incurred, of rearing anything that is good, or worth much money; and, thirdly, the strong disposition in this stock to become unsound. The result is, that a large portion of Yorkshire farmers, who formerly entered largely into the breeding of well-bred horses, now breed only cart-horses, one of which, at only two years old, will sell for £40.

Looking, then, at the present insufficient supply of horses calculated for our cavalry, and at the further diminution of it about to take place, I submit that a crisis has arrived. If this be so, let us take advantage of a period of military inaction by adopting some well-considered measure calculated to insure, in future, an adequate supply of good saddle-horses.

It will be said, that our cavalry-horses cannot be worse than those of other countries, so long as foreigners purchase them. But they ought to be, as they long were, much better,

seeing our great extent of fine pastures, our large farms, our great demand for the best class of horses, and the large sums we are ready to give for them.

France does not breed a sufficient supply of horses to meet her own demand, which is not surprising, seeing her small amount of pastures, the minute extent of her farms, and the poverty of her farmers. She purchases, in consequence, from Germany, many horses for her cavalry, and to a very limited extent she sometimes purchases English horses for it. Her cavalry horses, however, are much improved, as well as the riding of her dragoons. In short, her cavalry, as seen at Paris, has become better than ours.

The other great military nations breed all the horses they require for their cavalry. Russia and Austria possess very valuable ones for light cavalry in their Polish, Cossack, and Hungarian horses. They have but few well calculated for heavy cavalry, but their quality is improving.

The Russian artillery horses are admitted to be admirable.

The Prussians have, as a whole, still the

best mounted cavalry on the continent, but her finest breeds are become much deteriorated ; and in this way—there was, it seems, in that country after the conclusion of the last war a universal Anglo-mania for our race-horses, which they purchased largely for many years, and crossed extensively with their own breeds ; some of which before this event were excellent, uniting compact and fine forms with good breeding, and much speed. This form it seems has disappeared, and the long legs and shallow bodies of our race-horses substituted ; and so extensively has this cross been had recourse to, that the pure and best Prussian breeds are lost.

There is a fact well known to all Prussians taking interest in horses which bears directly on this subject, and is unmistakable. It is this :—before the blood of our race-horses had been so largely had recourse to in Prussia, the king was accustomed to be driven between Berlin and Potzdam in little more than an hour, the distance being twenty miles. Since, however, the blood of the old breeds of Prussian horses has been lost in its purity, his majesty is no longer able to get horses capable

of performing that task ; a change generally admitted to be the result of introducing into that country our racing blood in so large a stream. Foreigners still buy many of our horses, but chiefly for harness, and this on account of their high stature and showy appearance. The Germans and French still buy a few of our best saddle-horses while these are very young, and being good judges they select our best, and give from their scarcity enormously high prices.

The French cavalry horses are inferior to ours in speed, but they are much hardier and last much longer on service, as was shown during the last war in Spain, when our horses were better than at present. In that war the mortality amongst our horses from disease and work was enormous, and three times greater than amongst those of the French. The legs of the French horses were never what, in vulgar but well understood language, is called greased, while those of ours were but too often so. Thus the expense of keeping up our cavalry in Spain, owing to the delicacy of its horses, was intolerable. In the next war, if at all protracted, the mortality will be much greater, because

the quality of our horses has become much worse.

Our cavalry horses are not wanting either in speed or breeding, but in strength and constitutional vigour. If it were only to reduce the ruinous expense of this force in war we ought, while peace continues, to improve our breed of saddle-horses, enabling them to carry our dragoons, when on service, with tolerable ease. The great wear and tear, and consequent cost of this force in war is a serious evil, but less than that of losing brave men whose lives depend much on their horses maintaining their strength.

When we reflect on the important services good cavalry, well commanded, may perform, the present deteriorated condition of our cavalry horses calls for all the attention that Government can give to it. A charge of cavalry, while its horses remain fresh, made at the right moment, sometimes decides a great battle. But cavalry, to be efficient, must have its horses equal to the weight they have to carry, for dragoons on tired horses are useless.

Our light cavalry, unlike that of the great

continental nations, has to act in line, so that its duties differ little from those of heavy cavalry, and ought therefore to be mounted on horses of much physical power. At Waterloo, though at the opening of a campaign, our light cavalry failed from want of physical power, while our heavy cavalry charged successfully, from its greater weight.

Our artillery horses were, down to a recent period, the best in our army; they are now become as bad as the rest.

Looking at our great facilities for breeding horses, we ought, without taking credit to ourselves for much skill, to possess now what we formerly so long had—the best mounted cavalry in the world; while, for bearing up under the fatigues and privations of a severe campaign, both our cavalry and artillery horses are now become the worst in the world.

The late Lord Harcourt, who was considered in his time, an excellent cavalry officer, told me so long ago as the year 1826, that our cavalry horses in the American war were very much better than they had been since; that the 15th and 16th regiments of light dragoons, which went with him to America, and were

raised for that war, exhibited a union of strength and activity unknown at the time he was speaking (1826), yet our cavalry horses in 1826 were much better than at present.

The Polish, Cossack, and Hungarian horses being little removed from a state of nature, still possess the one great attribute of animals in that condition, namely, great hardiness.

This is the only civilized country that has ever succeeded in breeding anything like a sufficient supply of a fine class of saddle-horses, and she has now failed.

CHAPTER II.

The causes which led to the former excellence of our saddle-horses, and those which have caused their deterioration—Remedy.

THIS country having been long celebrated for its saddle-horses, I shall proceed to show the causes of that excellence, after which I shall endeavour to point out the causes of the present deterioration.

The main cause of their former excellence was the creation of what is called our “Turf.” This establishment worked well for a long period of time, exercising a preponderating and admirable influence over the character of our useful saddle-horses.

Doubtless, gambling and pleasure have ever been the sole objects of those who bred our race-horses ; but their large importations of good Arabs, followed as they were by a careful

and continuous selection, not for one quality, but for a fine union of qualities, succeeded for many years in producing both for the turf and for all useful and pleasurable purposes, the best saddle-horses in the world.

We possess a document which throws some light on the nature of the tasks our earlier horses performed. Their stature *so late as 1764* seems to have ranged from fourteen to fifteen hands; *a horse of the latter height being considered tall.*

The late Mr. Smith, in his work on "Breeding for the Turf," refers to a document which shows the nature of the tasks performed at Newmarket from 1718 to 1764, but it is only from the first period to 1757 that the distances run are always mentioned, while the weight carried is often omitted.

Referring to this document, Mr. Smith says, "It appears that in the year 1718, twenty-three matches were made at Newmarket, and in all but one of them, the distance run was four miles. In the next year only two races are recorded. First, the Duke of Wharton's Galloway, 8st. 10lb., against Lord Hillsborough's Fiddler, 12st., six miles. At New-

market, in 1720, there were twenty-six matches, none of them less than four, some six miles. In October, the Duke of Wharton's Honeyskin, 11st. 10lb., against Lord Hillsborough's Speedwell, the best of *three heats*, *twelve* miles, 1,000 guineas. The match was drawn. In 1721, twenty matches were run, and with few exceptions, these distances seem to have been run up to the year 1757. The published account from which these performances are taken refer only to the short period mentioned, and no consecutive account of the running, even at Newmarket, appears to have been kept until late in the last century. We have selected, however, the chronicled performances of a few horses. One of these, called *Exotic*, commenced his running 1760, and continued on the turf to the year 1767.

“We know not how many times this horse started during this period; but in the course of it he won eighteen times. The account says that he won in 1767, which was his seventh year on the turf, a race at Peterborough, consisting of *four heats*; the distance of the other races which he won are not stated, but they probably were not less than four miles.

“Cartouch was *only fourteen hands* high, but it is supposed that no horse was able to run with him of his time, carrying from eight to *twelve stones weight* !

“In 1737, Black Chance, at five years’ old, won a plate at Durham, carrying ten stones ; with the same weight he won the Ladies’ Plate, at York, in that year—distance four miles. In 1738, he won the King’s Plate at Guildford, beating several horses. After this he won the King’s Plate at Salisbury, then the King’s Plate at Winchester ; afterwards the King’s Plate at Lewes ; and, lastly, the King’s Plate at Lincoln ; all *these in the course of one season ; every race four miles, and every race contested* ! It appears that in the October of the same year this horse started for the King’s Plate at Newmarket, when he fell in running ; this was the only time he was beaten that year. In 1739 he seems to have won twice. In 1740, he won at Wresham, at Shrewsbury, and at Oswestry, carrying *thirteen stones*, he won at Denbigh, at Chester, and won at Manchester. In 1744 he walked over for the Annual Plate at Farnden.

“It does not appear whether this horse ran

in 1738, but if he did he was *running and winning, carrying twelve stones*. He won, in short, every time that he started in this year. In 1741 he won at Chester, at Manchester, and at Hereford. In 1742, he received a £15 premium *seven years consecutively*.

The following extract is taken from an account of a horse called the Carlisle gelding: "He had no rival in *carrying all degrees of weight in supporting repeated heats*, travelling and constant running, and this maintained to an age seldom heard of.

"Johnny, a horse of a more recent period, won or received forfeit twenty-five times !

"Mark Antony started twenty-eight times, and won twenty."

This account of the running of our older horses is interesting, because every one acquainted with our present race-horse knows that none of them could perform a fourth part of these tasks without breaking down. We see, indeed, the best horses, at the present day, after winning a race of only two miles, disabled from ever running again.

If, after reading these extracts from Mr. Smith's work, the reader will look at the por-

traits of such of our older race-horses as have been handed down to us by the pencil of Seymour and other artists, he will find that the forms of those horses corresponded with the great tasks they accomplished, for they had short legs, deep bodies, wide hips, and strong loins. The fine shapes of those horses show how little, as a race, they had been injured by their great performances, which commenced early in the reign of Charles the Second.

With the exception of a single race at Newmarket, of four miles, and only run twice a year, two miles, two miles and a half, one mile and a half, and one mile, are the distances now usually run. Then how is this four mile race run by our present horses? By cantering through a great part of it. The tasks now performed, however, are enough, and more than enough, for the diminished powers of our present horses.

Besides the great change which has taken place in the forms of our race-horses, they are become strongly disposed to lameness. Before even starting for their first race many of the best are lame, others are rendered so for life

by running a short race like that called "the Derby." Nearly all are more or less infirm from their birth, knuckling in their pastern joints before they have done an hour's work.

Our race-horses have been much injured under the existing practice on the turf of breeding them much in and in. Their great number seems at first sight sufficient to prevent this, but we must recollect that it is only from a small portion of the whole that the race is kept up; every one breeding for the turf sending his mares only to the stallions whose stock have most speed.

Had the old tasks been maintained this evil would have been avoided, because, when endurance and constitutional vigour became at all reduced in any stud, the owner of it would naturally have sent his mares to a stallion yet in possession of those qualities. Thus we see into what a vicious circle the present system of making momentary speed everything has led us. In viewing the defects of our present race-horses, as respects useful purposes, I must add that they exhibit straight shoulders, and to an extent unknown to our turf so late as thirty years ago. This great defect in our

race-horses is another cause which makes it now so difficult to breed the first class of saddle-horses, and is one of the results of breeding "in and in," for the purpose of following up a blood which has had momentary success in racing. Few people unconnected with the turf can imagine the degree of constitutional weakness exhibited by our present race-horses. The growing stock requires as much corn daily as they can eat, and for the first twelve months each has also the whole milk of a cow. It will here be said it is the early running which renders high feeding of the young stock necessary, but it is not so; on the contrary, many of the foals possess so little vigour, that without unnaturally high feeding they would be mere weeds, as they usually are when bred by persons not intending them for the turf, who in consequence do not feed their young horses so expensively. This high feeding sometimes enables those who breed for the turf to produce very large animals, but wanting that compact form which springs from much constitutional vigour in the parents. Nothing is so different as the form produced by extravagant feeding, and

that which results from much constitutional vigour.

The high stature of our race-horses has given a like form to nearly all our mixed breed of horses, and with more or less delicacy and want of constitutional vigour. Another bad consequence of this high stature, and accompanying delicacy, is the present frequency of the disease called roaring, which indicates imperfect action of the lungs. This disease seems to be every year increasing amongst our tall horses, while it is comparatively little known amongst those whose stature does not exceed 15 h. 2 in. On the continent, where the horses are much less delicate, *roaring is unknown*.

It is now many years since I have seen any English horses with those very flat fore legs, which result from very large back sinews, formerly so common amongst our well-bred horses, and yet to be seen amongst the best Arabs.

It is curious to observe the helplessness of our thorough-bred foals, which usually cannot move about for some days after being born. On first observing this I thought it natural, but soon found it was the pure effect of constitu-

tional weakness in the parents, as the foals of all other breeds of horses throughout the world run about as soon as they are dropped.

Notwithstanding the grant of public bounties to our turf for the encouragement of a fine breed of saddle-horses, we cannot in the absence on the part of Government of any attempt to influence the proceedings on the turf, be surprised to find that the Jockey Club met the growing weakness of their horses only by giving them less to do, in other words, by giving them slighter tasks to perform when they found the old ones had become too severe.

The Jockey Club, as a body, being content to see their horses lose every quality but speed, no individual of that society can be expected to make an effort to arrest this evil by taking a course in his individual capacity calculated to diminish the speed of his horses, so long as speed alone is the only quality required under the existing system of running.

To the Jockey Club, or to the gentlemen who breed our race-horses, it matters not what is the character of their horses as a whole, each individual desiring only to have the best of that whole. The question now is, whether

it be not desirable to grant such bounties on the part of Government as shall enable it to influence the proceedings of the turf, and thus render them subservient to national and useful purposes. These bounties pass under the name of King's or Queen's Plates, because paid out of the privy purse, and the Crown obtains the money to meet this special disbursement for the benefit of the public; yet those who receive these bounties make to the public no return; yet surely when the Jockey Club began to diminish the tasks formerly so well and so long performed by their horses, this downward course should have been met by Government advising the Crown either to suspend the payment of these bounties altogether, or to increase their amount to an extent which would enable it so to influence the proceedings of the turf, as to get there maintained the old standard for regulating the tasks the horses were called on to perform. Instead of taking one of these obvious courses, the Jockey Club was allowed successively to diminish the tasks which for so many years our race-horses had so well and so easily performed.

But we are told that these lighter tasks are

the result of making our racers run at a much earlier age, at two instead of at four years old. Doubtless, this change in the age at which the animals are made to run, has contributed to the totality of the evils complained of; but this system of early running did not exist when the tasks performed were great, and would never have been adopted had the old standard for measuring the performances on our turf been maintained. Nothing at least can be more certain than that horses bred to obtain increased bounties, *but having to perform the old tasks, would not be allowed by their owners to run until they had arrived at what was found to be the best age for performing those tasks.*

The qualities in our race-horses which are become so deteriorated are natural ones, namely, constitutional vigour, freedom from hereditary diseases, compactness of form, and great endurance under severe exertion. A general deterioration of the natural qualities of domesticated animals consequent on having been long subjected to highly unnatural treatment, can only be remedied by having recourse to fresh blood, to that of a race which as yet has

been permitted to live in a more natural state ; and I hope before closing this work to adduce facts which will fully bear out this opinion.

I formerly wished Government to create a great haras, making it directly influence the quality of our saddle-horses ; but, besides the certainty of improper persons being too often placed at the head of such an establishment, it would labour under the disadvantages of being unattended by competition, thus losing the mainspring on which great productive excellence depends.

If, however, we are to continue granting public bounties to the turf, it is surely desirable to obtain for the public some return.

The plan I propose rests on a sound principle—that of sharp competition amongst the breeders of our race-horses to obtain very liberal bounties, but under conditions which should render the outlay one of public utility.

It is impossible to determine, *à priori*, or until some trials have been made, the exact amount of bounties that will suffice to secure to the public the object in view. Probably three or four hundred pounds would be about the sum to award to the winners of certain

racers, making no allowance for age. How many of such races should be run in the course of a season can only be finally determined by gradually feeling our way in the new direction. For the first few years the aggregate amount of bounties annually required would be much greater than after sufficient time had elapsed for importing a considerable amount of fresh blood.

Government would only have to determine the nature of the tasks to be performed for which it granted the new bounties, leaving to the owners of the horses to find out the best mode of managing them. This would not fail to succeed if Government only sternly maintained a fixed standard for measuring the powers of the horses. Under this four miles with heats should be the shortest distance run for which the new bounties were granted. One or two races in the year should be five miles and heats. We need not fear the effect of these distances being evaded, as is now the case with the four mile race, yet maintained by allowing the horses that start for it to do little more than canter during a great part of the race. Why? Simply because now the proprietors

of such horses are all in the same boat, by all possessing horses unfitted for running the whole of that distance. Thus it is not worth any man's while now breeding horses for our turf to change the nature of his stud on account of this one four-mile race. But grant liberal bounties annually for several four-mile races, and you will make it the interest of all who start horses for those races to breed such as they think best calculated to win them.

Insist on proper tasks being performed in return for more liberal bounties, and you will soon find our "turf" abounding with horses displaying a fine union of constitutional vigour, physical strength, endurance, with sufficient speed for every useful and pleasurable purpose. It can matter nothing to the gentlemen on the turf what is the average speed of their horses. Their sole object is to win money, and if endurance be in future made by more liberal bounties as necessary to enable their horses to perform the new tasks, as speed is now to enable them to perform the present tasks, the owners of our race-horses will be in future as desirous to breed horses displaying a

fine union of qualities, as they now are to breed horses wanting every quality but speed.

No one dislikes gambling of every kind more than I; but so long as we have a great racing establishment, patronized both by the Crown and the Government, and paid annually a sum of public money by way of bounty for a public object, we ought to try at least to obtain for the public some return for this outlay.

If in commencing this new system it was found, on trial, that our present breed of race-horses could, without any admixture of fresh blood, best perform the new tasks, no fresh blood would be needed, and many of my observations under that head, being thus proved erroneous, would fall to the ground. If, on the contrary, it should be found that our present breed of horses could not compete in the performance of the new tasks with horses that had an admixture of fresh blood in their veins, then that mixture, we may be assured, would be generally had recourse to. If, on the other hand, it was found that the new tasks were best performed by Arabs of pure blood, then that class of horse would be alone had recourse

to by those who competed for the increased bounties. One of the many advantages resulting from this plan is its simplicity, requiring Government only to determine the nature of the tasks to be performed; namely, the distances to be run, and the weights to be carried, leaving all the rest to be worked out under the principle of competition by the owners of the horses.

One consequence resulting from this plan being carried out would be the certainty of the best horses being imported that were obtainable in the East, as some of the persons who breed our race-horses would go there themselves to select horses, while others would send competent judges there for that special purpose. No allowance of weight should be made in order to encourage the system of late years so much indulged in of running horses too early, diminishing by this practice their constitutional vigour, and disposing them to early infirmities; evils which we know, by experience, extend to all our mixed breeds of saddle-horses. Though it would be well not to neglect this precaution, it is not however likely to be required, seeing that if our race-horses were

called on to perform the old tasks, they would be pretty sure to be started by their owners at the age best calculated to enable their horses to perform them well.

CHAPTER III.

Character of Arab horses and their fitness to restore the qualities lost by our present race-horses.

MOST of the Arab horses which have of late years come to this country, have not been of the first class, being purchased on the coasts of certain Eastern countries, by persons having little acquaintance with horses beyond that of profit and loss in buying and selling them. Thus, while the Arab horses can only be purchased in the Desert at high prices, no one either in England or India will now give those prices for any class of Arabs, seeing that they have very little marketable value here since discarded on our turf. Still, even under this discouragement, an Arab horse now and then arrives in this country, having much merit, and

in breeding from which good stock has been obtained for every purpose, save that of competing on the turf with the speed of our present race-horses. The Arabian horses, as found in the Desert, are not without speed, as was shown some years ago at Goodwood ; but they can only run at their full stretch for about half-a-mile. At a hand gallop, and under a burning sun, their endurance is scarcely credible, and their value in the Desert rests on the distances they can travel at that pace without fatigue or being attacked by staggers from long exposure to an ardent sun. When a horse has acquired in the Desert reputation for this power, a large sum of money can be obtained for him, as the life of a freebooter is often made to depend on the endurance of his horse.

General Daumas, who has been in Africa, either as Consul or General, since the year 1837, and speaks the language, says in his work on the horses of the Sahara district, that a good horse there will travel during five or six days continuously journeys from 75 to 90 miles, and after two days' rest will be fit to recommence this task. He adds that "*Les voyages dans le Sahara ne sont pas toujours d'aussi*

long haleine, mais il n'est pas rare, d'un autre côté, de voir des chevaux faire cinquante ou soixante lieues dans les vingt-quatre heures." In other words, that it is not uncommon to see horses in that country travel in twenty-four hours from 150 to 180 miles !

After citing other facts, illustrating the great powers of endurance of the horses in Sahara, he adds, "Et pourquoi chercherais-je à prouver ces faits ? Tous les anciens officiers de la division d'Oran peuvent raconter qu'en 1837, un Général attachant la plus grande importance à obtenir des renseignements de Flemcon donna son propre cheval à un Arabe pour aller les lui chercher. Celui-ci parti du Chateaufort à quatre heures du matin, et rentra le lendemain à la même heure après avoir fait 70 lieues (210 miles) sur un terrain bien autrement accidenté que le desert." The General then adds, "*Le cheval Européen a disparu de notre armée d'Afrique dont il ne pouvait seconder ni les charges impétueuses ni les marches incessantes. Il a été remplacé par le cheval du pays.*"

The General then says that the French Government have established three dépôts or

haras for the maintenance of the best stallions they could select in the country. When he wrote, the number of these stallions was seventy-four; but he says, instead of being content with this number, it must be raised to 150. It seems that to these dépôts the farmers send their mares, and that the quality of the race is improving under this system.

General Daumas brings forward the opinion of Abd-el-Kader to show that the horses called barbes, which abound in Africa, descended originally from Arabs. Whatever they descended from, they possess wonderful powers of endurance, and some of the best should be imported into this country.

In a letter written by the lamented Burkhart, and lent to me for perusal by Mr. Sewell, of the Veterinary College, the writer says that a breed of horses called Koheys is the best in Syria, yet that amongst them “not more than about 200 of the first class of horses are usually to be found, each of which may be worth in the Desert itself from £150 to £200. Of these horses very few, *if any*, ever found their way to Europe, although *it is through them alone* that successful attempts could be made to ennoble

the European race, while the usually imported horses are all of a second or third quality."

We may be assured, for the reasons already stated, that these prices are now never given by those who buy Arab horses for the Indian or English market. Very high prices are sometimes given by a foreign sovereign or wealthy foreign individual sending an agent into the Desert for this special purpose, and obtaining by these means horses very superior to those which usually arrive here or in India.

There are here two conflicting opinions respecting the merits of Arab horses, and both are erroneous. The first is, that no Arab horse is worth having; the second, that all are good. There are to be found in certain Eastern countries, by those who will seek them, Arab horses capable of satisfying the best judges; but the great mass of them, though good for hard work, are not agreeable to ride. We want true, safe, and agreeable action, while Arab horses having such are not numerous even in the Desert. The natives of those regions care, it seems, little about the form, or even the safe action of their horses,

provided they are very enduring under severe exertion, enabling the rider to travel long distances in a few hours. But individual horses have been occasionally brought to this country with all the qualities of first-rate hacks.

One of the objections made here to Arab horses is, that they trip in their walk, all, however, admitting that they don't trip in their other paces. The reason of their tripping in their walk is their being tied from an early age by their forefeet instead of the head. Thus, in their walk they are compelled to step short, being just what they ought not to do. When not subjected to this barbarous treatment, Arab horses, I believe, walk generally as well as any others.

There is now in London an Arab horse that was obtained by a Spanish gentleman, his present owner, many years ago by sending out a competent person with a special mission to purchase the best animals he could find in one of the Eastern Deserts, and this horse was the result of that mission. He is now very old, but his form is quite unlike that of the Arabs usually imported, while very like the portraits of se-

veral of our best horses that raced about the middle of the last century.

There is a black Arab in London, the property of M. Helbert, the action of which is perfect both in the walk, trot, and canter. M. Helbert tells me an Arab he previously had walked quite as well as his present one. Out of several Arab horses that have arrived here for her Majesty and Prince Albert, two or three have turned out excellent hacks, and walk well. It is therefore certain that Arabs can be selected, even under the present system of the Desert of tying them by their feet, instead of their head, that are excellent hacks.

Other horses have during the last thirty years arrived in this country from the East whose progeny have been very good. The Wellesley Arabian, imported by the late Lord Cowley, only about forty or fifty years ago was so speedy that his blood yet holds a high place at Newmarket.

General Daumas says, and I believe truly, that people who want the best class of either Arabs or Barbies must not rest content to send to the coasts for them ; that, on the contrary,

they must send special agents into the heart of the Desert.

“Ces nobles animaux ne viendront pas nous trouver sur le littoral, il faut aller les chercher dans l'intérieur des terres, souvent au loin.”

The reader has seen that Burkhart travelling in Syrian deserts expresses the same opinion as to the only mode of obtaining in these countries the best horses.

Whenever competent judges shall go into the heart of the Desert, ready to give high prices, they will obtain very valuable horses, but such persons must look to fine form and true action, as well as endurance. On no account must they select horses with straight shoulders or weak loins. Neither must they object to a horse on account of low stature, because when our system of feeding is applied to small but vigorous Arabs, the progeny obtained from them will, like that obtained from their predecessors on our turf, be only too much disposed to acquire high stature, in doing which they, after a time, wholly lose the compact and strong form of their ancestors.

There is no doubt that the stature of our

early race-horses did not exceed fourteen hands, while that of our present ones is rarely less than sixteen hands, and often more, while they have lost the fine symmetry of their ancestors, that performed so long and so well great tasks.

Nothing is more certain than that there are Arab horses to be found more agreeable to ride than any others in the world, save a very few of our thorough-bred, or nearly thorough-bred horses, but these are now become such rare exceptions as only to make us regret the more that the great mass of our well-bred horses are become so bad for all useful purposes. Even those that are so agreeable are usually disposed to lameness when ridden at a quick pace on hard roads, and can rarely carry more than very light weights.

CHAPTER IV.

On the form and action of good saddle-horses.

A GOOD hack has become so rare in this country that few people are practically acquainted with one; and few, in consequence, have experienced the pleasure which riding one affords to a competent judge of action. On a horse of this class a rider does not think it necessary to pick his way, even on the worst roads, feeling an instinctive but correct assurance that he is riding an animal which will not fall. The fore-feet of such an one, be the pace it is going what it may, are ever well forward, and fall flat on the ground, while the fore-legs, when in action, are sufficiently, but not too much bent, while their action comes from the shoulders. But the most striking characteristic in these horses is the ease with which they

move in all their paces, thus sparing the rider any feeling of fatigue. Not only is the number of such horses in this country become very limited, but those we have usually display early some of the infirmities to which their race has become so subject.

We could not, under any system of management, expect to produce horses capable of carrying eighteen and twenty stones of weight while having the agreeable action and high breeding of horses that are only wanted to carry much lighter weights. But once able to produce a great number of saddle-horses full of good blood, and yet able to carry fourteen stones of weight in the best manner, and we shall have no difficulty in producing, by the aid of a cross with a lower, but stronger breed of horses, the finest cavalry horses in the world.

It is not necessary to a good cavalry horse to have the best class of shoulders, but these must be strong, and the fore-feet not so far back as to make the horse "stand over," as it is called, like a cart-horse. A good cavalry horse must join, to great physical power, sufficient breeding to render him active and en-

during under long marches, and with the heavy weight of a fully equipped soldier on his back. What is most essential to a cavalry horse is strong loins, for without these no horse can properly carry the heavy weight of a fully equipped soldier.

Seeing what selection, carefully and long-continued, on our turf has effected, when the object in view became the single quality of speed, and this in respect to a race which has sprung from Arabs, we may reasonably anticipate much more important and durable results from equally careful selection, when the object has become a fine union of desirable qualities. This change of system would be followed by a loss of some speed on the turf, but what could that matter to the public, or for any useful purpose, seeing that the new class of horses would have more endurance under severe exertion, and more power to carry weight, while gentlemen connected with the turf would win and lose money with as much facility as at present? But the speed lost by our race-horses would be amply made up to the public by the additional speed gained by its useful saddle-horses, and for this reason: in breed-

ing hunters or hacks now strong enough to carry more than very light weights, we dare not have recourse to much racing blood, because, if we did, the produce would want physical strength. Thus, we have scarcely any saddle-horses able to carry fourteen stones which are not so full of bad blood that they want both speed and endurance, while our better bred horses are so deficient in strength that they can carry but little weight.

It is the wretched condition of our cavalry which calls on Government so loudly to improve, by its interference, the present supply of our saddle-horses, but it would be desirable to see a large class of the community able to buy saddle-horses calculated to carry them safely, and for a reasonable price. Besides invalids, there is a large mass of persons in our highly fictitious state of society, confined to the house during the greater part of the day by mental occupation, and of more or less public importance. Many of these, no longer young, have become somewhat heavy, and require, in consequence, horses to carry them of considerable strength; while such as are strong enough to do this have become in the last degree bad,

because, being full of cart-horse blood, they have straight shoulders, and, what is worse, their fore-feet greatly too much under them. Then their low breeding makes them quickly tire after trotting one or two miles, when their action undergoes a change, by their beginning to step short—next to show the rider their shoes—then to trip—and, if not soon pulled up, to fall. I have known several persons of the class now described, whose sedentary labours were of no small importance to their country, whose health would have been much improved if they had been able to get daily exercise on horses sufficiently safe.

I have said that our hunters and hacks, not now able to carry more than a light weight, have less racing blood in their veins than the same classes had in the recollection of many persons now living. Formerly, horses when capable of carrying fourteen stones of weight, were so well bred as not only never to have their coats clipped in winter, but never to require it; and this was the case for some years after the commencement of this century.

Then, up to nearly the end of the last century, what long journeys people made in a day!

One gentleman told me, when I was a boy, that he had often travelled from London to Derby in a day on the same horse, distance 140 miles. This person was six feet high, with broad shoulders. Where is now the English horse able to carry a large man such a distance? Yet, unless we disbelieve what General Daumas tells us, with the express sanction of other French generals, who were long in Africa, this journey to Derby sinks by comparison into nothing.

Should it ever please the Government of this country to influence the character of our race-horses in the way here recommended, we cannot fail once more to possess a good supply of horses, uniting sufficient speed with much endurance and great physical strength. Then, and then only, in breeding horses intended to carry much weight, we shall not fear to give them much racing blood.

Our thorough bred horses are now rarely fit for riding on the road. Those which are sufficiently strong are too tall for this work, and their fore-legs are usually too infirm, while few bend their knees enough to be safe. Those which move with straight knees are called

“daisy cutters,” and their value for hacks is thereby destroyed.

I am, however, far from admiring that action which displays *much* bending of the knees, because it is always laborious in the trot or gallop, usually indicates low breeding, and always an action which does not come, as it should do, from the shoulders.

Let us now suppose that sufficiently liberal bounties have been granted to our turf, and the old tasks in consequence resumed upon it; that a sound, compact, and vigorous race of horses is the result, and that in consequence our farmers are able to breed good, instead of, as at present, bad horses. The price of good ones would then soon fall, while our farmers would yet be better remunerated; because where they now breed one good saddle-horse, they would then breed many, and at much less expense.

Good saddle-horses have long been so scarce with us, that few people know the form of one. Like good pictures, fine forms are best understood where they most abound, it being vain to reason with people upon forms of either art or nature which they have never

seen. To understand, however, the best form for a saddle-horse, we must not only often see it, but become practically acquainted with the result by frequently riding well-formed horses.

Thus few people are now found amongst us who know what constitutes good shoulders in a horse ; persons of experience asserting they should be fine, meaning by this lean at the withers. It is however certain that a young horse's shoulders that is intended to carry more than a very light weight can hardly be too thick at that place, provided they are not thick at the points or lower ends, while inclining at their tops well back, leaving the greatest obtainable space between the end of the mane and the pommel of the saddle. There is a certain cross bone which connects the lower end of the shoulder blades with the animal's fore-legs, which very materially affects action. When this is long it throws the fore-legs too much back, making the animal stand over like a cart-horse ; such a horse, when at all tired, is pretty sure to fall. I am here stating what is A B C to a good judge, but I write for the many.

The shoulders here recommended, however,

only contribute to good action, they do not secure it; good hind-leg action being quite as important as good fore-leg action. The hock-joints should bend well when in action, bringing the hind-feet well forward. All superior horses, whether racers, hunters, hacks, or harness horses, are eminently characterised by fine hind-leg action. Be the shoulders ever so good, unless the action of the hind-legs be also good, a horse is not safe while its paces are uneasy to its rider, and this because the action of the two sets of legs are not properly balanced. Such a horse is unsafe, and makes his rider, if a judge, feel that he is so; but if the animal's hind and fore-leg action be properly balanced, the rider feels that his horse cannot come down; and he seems, in this case, to use a dealer's phrase, to be always "riding up hill," while under opposite circumstances he seems to be always "riding down hill."

Much importance is assigned, and this by judges, to great length between the hips and the hocks. This form, however, carried to the extent it is amongst our race-horses, is wholly factitious, and the pure result of long-continued selection for speed, as exhibited in

that highly factitious animal the greyhound. I am old enough to remember when this form in our race-horses was much less developed than it is at present; and if we may judge of the older race-horses by their portraits, this form, as now seen, was unknown to them. For a hack this form is uncalled for, and would soon disappear on our turf if the old tasks were renewed. In now, however, selecting a hunter, it may be right to choose one with this form, because it proves that the animal has much good blood in his veins, and that he is in consequence speedy. But our hunters had not formerly this shape, and did not require it. Some say that the hunters of the last century would not have been speedy enough for modern fox-hounds, but this is assertion only, and opposed to two important facts. The first of these is, that the speed of modern fox-hounds was given to their race in the last century by Mr. Meynell, and no one pretends that our horses in his time could not keep up with his hounds. Our hunters had not their present form until some years after the commencement of the present century, while nearly all our fox-hounds had before

that become very speedy, but not too speedy for the horses of that period.

The second fact is one to which I can speak, namely, that our hunters very early in this century, and before they became so long from the hips to the hock, scould keep up with our stag-hounds, while these have even gone much faster than our fox-hounds, because they have to work on a stronger scent. But I have shown that our hunters, formerly able to carry much weight, had more racing blood in their veins than those of the present day.

This unnaturally wide space between the hips and his hocks is inconvenient from frequently producing "over-reach."

A horse's hips should be wide and his loins highly muscular, but the lower end of his shoulders should be light.

The chest of a horse of the first class cannot be too protuberant, but may be too wide for speed. The chest, however, cannot be too deep, or the ribs before the girths too long, while the back ribs, when much speed is required, should be rather short. For very fine action, therefore, the shoulder-blades must be long, while they cannot be so without

inclining well back. If a horse so formed has good hind-leg action he will be very valuable, because this form of shoulders is, I regret to say, now scarcely to be found amongst our saddle-horses, in the stronger portion of which the girths are only kept from slipping away forward by the animal's fore-legs; making the rider sit almost on the withers rather than on the back of his horse.

Unless the space which intervenes between the end of the mane and the pommel of the saddle be thick in a young horse, it becomes too thin, and consequently weak when the animal arrives at its prime.

The neck of a saddle-horse of the first class is never very fleshy or coarse until the animal becomes old. The only good shape for useful purposes now to be found in our race-horses is that of their hocks. Sickie hocks, as they are called, so frequent in other breeds, will not stand racing, though they frequently remain sound when less speed is required. But this form should be avoided.

The best height for horses intended for hacks of the first class ranges from 14 h. 3 in. to 15 h. 2 in. A horse 15 h. 3 in. may be a

useful saddle-horse for several purposes, but not so good for a hack as one of lower stature ; and for these reasons : a tall horse does not move—all other things being equal—with the ease and lightness of one of lower stature, and, in consequence, wears its legs more, and fatigues more its rider.

In thus comparing horses of different statures, I have been supposing them equally well-bred, and equally well-formed, but nearly all our tall horses are tall now only because they have long legs, which are objectionable ; first, because they don't wear well ; secondly, because always allied with a shallow body. These horses do well enough for the London streets, where a showy appearance is the object in view, but they are not calculated for hard work, and are peculiarly unfitted for a hilly country.

Fifteen hands three inches is not too high for heavy cavalry horses, provided it be attained by a deep body instead of long legs. Horses really tall do not appear so when well-formed. We see this exemplified in a tall and well-formed man, who never appears so tall as one of like height who has a narrow chest and narrow shoulders, who in short has a weak form.

That of our thorough-bred and nearly thorough-bred horses, is at present well illustrated by the greater part of our officers' chargers. If one of these had appeared at the commencement of this century its form would have excited universal surprise. Now the downward course of our horses has so long been going on as to prepare people for the sight of these feeble creatures.

As respects cavalry horses that have to carry twenty stones of weight, not a drop of our present race-horse blood should be in their veins, yet they must not be cart-horses. They should have the compact form obtainable from Arab blood, crossed with that of a stronger but lower bred race, yet superior to that of the cart-horse. It is not long since they bred in Ireland good hunters without recurrence to the blood of our race-horse, but the Irish horse they then possessed has disappeared. I have much to say on obtaining a cross for our race-horses that will produce animals with that strength and activity required for cavalry of a high class, but it is useless to do this unless Government consented to influence the proceedings on our turf.

Political economists tell us the supply of everything should be left to the operation of the general principle which they assert regulates supply and demand, but I submit that, powerful as that principle undoubtedly is, it is not a general one, and that as respects many objects of art the supply may remain—as respects home production—for centuries either nil or bad. Such is the case with many articles we are content to get from France. The Swiss too have ever been our superiors in making watches, and nearly all those sold now in this country by those of our tradesmen who call themselves watch-makers come from Switzerland.

If it be said that breeding a sufficient supply of good saddle-horses requires no skill, how then are we to account for no civilized nation, save our's, having ever succeeded in doing this, and that we should at length have failed?

The Polish, Hungarian, and Cossack horses are very good for some purposes, but have not enough physical power to carry heavy cavalry, or any class of cavalry that has to act in line. For this purpose a factitiously strong animal is wanted, but having a sufficiency of speed and endurance.

To succeed in breeding the best class of saddle-horses, that practical experience which is obtained by riding long distances at considerable speed is needed. The Irish farmers owed much of their former success in breeding good saddle-horses to their custom of riding after hounds. Having lost their own race of well-bred horses, they are now compelled to breed partly from the English race-horse, a measure which has been fatal.

Returning to the general principle which we are told regulates supply and demand, I must remind the reader that the stock from which all our best horses have descended was not imported by farmers, but by gentlemen regardless of expense, yet the animals they imported turned out excellent, not only for racing, but for useful purposes, and this I have shown was their character for a long period of time, or until the old test of merit was abandoned. Farmers who breed in every country the mass of saddle-horses, have no time to go to Syria or Africa in search of stallions, and, if they had, have rarely either the capital or necessary knowledge for securing success.

Supposing a farmer to leave his numerous

and important affairs at home, in order to go to Syria or Africa in search of a stallion, and that he returns home with a good one, what must then soon happen? Why unless many other farmers took a similar course, our farmer must soon go abroad again in search of another stallion, or allow his stock to breed in and in, by which it would soon become deteriorated. This must be the final result unless other farmers, following this man's example, secured for their country a sufficient supply of foreign stallions. It is enough, however, to say that no farmers in any country have ever yet taken such a course.

If, then, our saddle-horses have generally become bad, and our cavalry is in consequence ill-mounted, this is one of those cases in which the principle which usually regulates supply and demand fails, and we must look either to direct interference on the part of Government, or to some special plan suited to this exceptionable case.

The reader will observe that I have been directing his attention chiefly to what constitutes the first class of saddle-horses, but we cannot under any system expect to mount our

cavalry on this class. A cavalry soldier fully equipped for service requires an amount of physical strength in his horse incompatible with much speed, or highly agreeable action. All that can be expected in cavalry horses that have to act in line, and to do also the duty of light troops, is much strength, combined with sufficient activity and endurance, and such can only be obtained from a cross between the Arab and a stronger but inferior race.

Government may not now think itself called on to take any step for improving the breed of our saddle-horses; but a day will arrive when the matter will be forced on its attention, though not, I fear, should war in the meantime arrive, till the lives of many brave soldiers have been sacrificed.

Whenever that time shall arrive no country at all likely to possess a good breed of Arab horses should be left unvisited. The impression now generally is that Syria has better horses than any other portion of the East; but after reading attentively Daumas' work on the horses of Africa, I recommend the importation of some of the best of those. Their

exportation was effectually prevented under Abdel-Kader, but the French Government would probably not refuse us its assistance in endeavouring to purchase horses in that country.

CHAPTER V.

On the close analogy between the principles which should guide us in breeding saddle-horses, and those by which we have so long succeeded in breeding other domesticated animals.

IN breeding other domesticated animals it has very long been the practice to have recourse to fresh blood when the natural, as well as some of the acquired qualities of those animals have become deteriorated.

The first of these cases I propose to consider is that of our fox-hounds, which, not being assisted, like foreign hounds, by fire-arms, have to kill their game by their own exertion. They require a strong sense of smell, speed, and endurance. If the master of such hounds were to remain quiescent when they begin to fall off in any or these qualities, they would soon cease to kill foxes, because these being wild animals, as a race

their physical powers do not vary so long as they have to obtain their food in the usual manner. In a district factitiously full of game foxes have less endurance than in one where they are obliged to travel daily some distance after food; and in most of our hunting districts foxes are compelled to make this exertion, and by it they maintain their speed and great natural endurance. As these strong foxes are what our hounds have usually to hunt, these cannot afford to lose any portion of their speed or endurance. When those qualities begin to deteriorate in a pack of hounds, the master of it can only meet this by having recourse to fresh blood, to that of a pack of hounds which has been better managed than his own, as he cannot render the killing of foxes less difficult when the powers of his hounds are become diminished.

The work of a fox-hound is severe, requiring speed, endurance, a particular form of foot, and sloping shoulders, and in the absence of this form they soon become lame.

Thus our fox-hounds are not bred in reference to one quality, but to four; namely, form, speed, endurance, and fine sense of

smell. The standard by which these qualities are measured, being a fixed one, our fox-hounds are not allowed to deteriorate.

How different is the situation of those who breed our race-horses. Having no fixed standard by which to test the physical powers of their horses, they have gradually lowered that they so long maintained, as the power of their horses diminished.

If speed alone had been the object of those who breed our fox-hounds, it would have led to breeding in and in, as on our turf, and thus endurance, constitutional vigour, and that form which is the result of vigour, would have been lost.

The history of our pointers is also significant. We have succeeded in giving them the factitious quality of pointing game, instead of rushing on it, under their natural instinct; but these dogs after a time deteriorate; pointing all sorts of animals, losing their speed and their spirit. It becomes then necessary to cross them either with other pointers not yet deteriorated, or with fox-hounds whose integrity of character has been better maintained.

The history of the deer-hound is equally

instructive. This animal is not assisted in the chase by the sense of smell, but depends wholly on its speed and courage, this last quality being soon lost unless the race be occasionally crossed with that of the bull-dog. The result of the first cross makes the offspring too slow, but one cross back with the grey-hound gives them sufficient speed without too much lowering the spirit they derived from the bull-dog.

The course taken with the deer-hound has been produced, to a certain extent, with greyhounds, which are only required to kill hares. These dogs, after a time, lose their courage, and soon give up the chase when it ceases to be easy. When this happens they are crossed with a more vigorous race of greyhounds, and sometimes with the bull-dog. The standard by which the power of each of these animals is measured is a fixed one, and when that power declines the remedy had recourse to is ever fresh blood.

The necessity, after a time, of having recourse to this, when a race of animals under domestication has been too far removed from one of nature, is well illustrated by Mr. Bake-

well's new Leicester sheep, so celebrated for their extraordinary disposition to fatten, and for their long wool. The pure breed of those sheep soon became very delicate, and I am confident that not one is now to be found in the full integrity of Mr. Bakewell's blood. Crossed, as they have been, by other flocks of Leicesters, having less constitutional delicacy, they rarely drop more than one lamb each, and require a rich pasturage.

The history, however, of our cattle is yet more instructive than that of any other of our domesticated animals which have been much withdrawn from a state of nature, or from one little removed from it. Such of our breeds of cattle as have endured for any considerable time, have been always reared, and continue to be reared, on poor or indifferent pasturage.

In our rich pasture districts, where our best cheese is made, the cattle are soon forced up to a large and unnatural size, and in consequence lose, after a time, so much of their constitutional vigour as to require frequent renovation from fresh blood, from that of cattle which remain in a more natural state. I do not blame the course thus taken with the cattle in

our dairy districts, as they have been made by rich food to yield much more milk. Cows in a state little removed from one of nature, namely, those still bred on poor soils, yield much less milk than those which inhabit more fertile districts. In a state of nature, or in one little removed from it, the udder and milk veins of the cow are little developed compared with those of cows which have been kept on rich pastures, and under a system of continued selection for their milking qualities. A race of large dairy cattle, while not called upon to make any physical exertion, or submit to any privations, may continue for many years to answer the object of the farmer, if breeding too much in and in be avoided.

The buildings required by dairy cattle during winter are expensive, and large cows are, therefore, more economically housed than small ones. The history, however, of these enlarged cattle, shows that their existence as a race is ephemeral, while that of the smaller cattle which occupies poorer districts of land, there is every reason to believe has endured for ages. In our rich dairy counties, where the pasturage is rich, the breeds of cattle which occupy them

have been of late years frequently changed, either wholly or partially, by a cross with cattle in a more natural state, and so far as we are acquainted with the facts resulting from this change, with excellent results.

The old short horns, which thirty years ago came from Yorkshire in such crowds to London to supply it with milk, had become coarse, long-legged, ill-shapen, and delicate. They required expensive food and fattened slowly, yielding a large quantity of milk, but little either of curd or butter. This race has been renovated within a few years by a cross with a hardier breed, that is, with one in a more natural condition, and the produce is known under the name of the "new short horns." This race is a great improvement upon the old one, and has spread over all our dairy counties, displacing the race of long horns which forty years ago occupied those districts. The long horns, as a race, had little antiquity to boast of, for Lisle, who wrote towards the end of the 17th century, says, "that in his time the dairy counties of York, Derby, Stafford, and Lancashire, were occupied with black cattle having wide spreading horns." This

race, we may suppose, continued for some time after the death of Lisle. The county of Gloucester is stated to have had a distinct breed of cattle, which was changed about the middle of the last century for the long horns, and these having since given way to the new short horns. Thus, all our dairy districts distinguished for rich pasturage, have been compelled, at short periods, to change entirely their breeds of dairy cattle, by having recourse to such as were in a more natural condition.

The long horns were relinquished in our dairy districts because they had ceased to fatten well.

Dairy farmers are liable to great losses from their cows miscarrying; and when this once begins in a cow-house, it extends rapidly, and subjecting the farmer to great losses, unless his cows after this fatten kindly. Thus, while housing during winter is necessary for large milking cows, it is attended with this very serious drawback. The little disposition to fatten after miscarriage of the old long horns, led to the introduction throughout our dairy counties of the improved short horns, a hardier race, formed by a cross with the Scotch cattle.

As milking cows require to be housed dur-

ing winter, and as large ones, besides yielding a greater supply of milk, are more economically housed than small ones, there is no objection to the course taken by our dairy farmers, considering how easily, when their cattle become too delicate, their vigour can be renewed by a cross with breeds in a more natural condition.

The small Suffolk polled cows maintain their ground because reared on a poor pasturage, for which they are suitable, but they are unfitted for a rich one

The history of our cattle intended for the butcher is very different. There is every reason to suppose that nearly all the existing breeds have lasted in their present form for ages. The most numerous are the Scotch, which are in a state very little removed from one of nature, exhibiting excellent forms, and yielding unrivalled beef.

It is an unfailing characteristic of wild animals to die under severe hardships, or wholly to recover, those of the same race never exhibiting the essential differences of form displayed by domesticated animals kept in a very factitious state, some exhibiting long, while others display short, backs—some long

legs, and others short ones—some strong loins, and others weak ones.

Thus, most of the Scotch cattle being in a state little removed from one of nature, display, when of the same race, a striking uniformity of shape. This, however, is not the characteristic of cattle kept on rich pasturage and housed during the winter months, as in our dairy counties.

The Welsh cattle are inferior to the Scotch, but are well fitted for districts where the pasturage is poor.

The Devons and Herefords are supposed to be indigenous. The oxen of these races arrive at a considerable size, and are active in the yoke. The Hereford oxen are larger than the Devon, but are equally active in the yoke. These are probably the two best breeds of cattle in the world for the purposes of working in the yoke, and yielding a large supply of excellent food.

How then does it happen, that without recurring to fresh blood, or to a cross, the oxen of these two races arrive at a large size, while continuing hardy, and active in the yoke? The solution of these apparently incompatible

facts is found in the judicious practice of keeping down the stature of the parents—that is of the bulls and cows, as is shown in the following extract from a letter of the late Mr. Knight, of Herefordshire, to the Board of Agriculture, in which that able physiologist *alludes to the great difference between the size of the cows and oxen of that county*. He appears in this publication to take just pride in the oxen, but he seems ashamed of the cows. He thus writes:—"The Herefordshire breeders seem unanimously agreed that a very large cow, however well-formed and perfect in every other respect, rarely produces a good ox; and they, therefore, justly disregard the weight and intrinsic value of their cows, reckoning those the best which experience has taught them are best calculated to produce good oxen." Thus, it follows, that the Herefordshire ox is a very superior animal to the cow, often attaining double the weight. I do not, however, admit but that this county can show as beautiful cows as any in the island, but it is the ox on which it prides itself, and stands, I am confident, without a rival.

If so able a man as Mr. Knight could over-

look the nature of the necessity which obliges the Herefordshire farmers to maintain this great distinction between the size of their cows and that of their oxen, we cannot wonder at finding this principle so generally disregarded.

The author of the "Farmer's Series" speaks in the same sense of the Hereford cows and oxen.

I think it impossible for any thinking man, after reading this account of our cattle, not to be struck by the affinity it displays between the principles which should guide us in the management of both horses and cattle.

The history of the last points out how impossible it is to withdraw them from a state of nature, so as to increase greatly their size without reducing their constitutional vigour. It shows how this difficulty has been successfully met by those who breed our Devon and Herefordshire cattle, keeping down the size of the parents of their large oxen.

We cannot reflect on these facts without coming to the conclusion that when any domesticated animals have been long much removed from a state of nature, and have in consequence lost some of their natural qualities, a cross

with animals of the same race, which have been less removed from a state of nature, is the only remedy. These facts prove that no domesticated race of animals whose natural habits have been much changed by human interference, long escapes deterioration in respect to some of its natural qualities, unless renovated by fresh blood.

Seeing, then, the course taken with our cattle, we cannot doubt that our farmers would pursue the same course with our saddle-horses if they could.

We have no power over the qualities given by nature to animals, save that which results from long-continued selection of individuals for propagating their race, which possess, in a pre-eminent degree, the qualities we want. Horses of the same race are not equally speedy, or equally enduring. If, then, the object of the breeding of saddle-horses be speed alone, we select for that one quality; but if the object of the breeder be endurance as well as speed, he must breed from animals that possess that union of qualities. It is the same in cows; such as naturally afford more milk than others we

breed from, when milk is our object, but when beef is our object we select those individuals for breeding which will be soonest fat ; such, in short, as make the greatest return for the food they have consumed. When we require in cattle activity in the yoke, as well as a strong disposition to fatten, we select those individuals to breed from which possess the best union of these two qualities.

One principle of breeding has become well understood by those who breed either cattle or sheep, which is carefully to avoid breeding in and in. Happy would it have been for mankind had this principle been better kept in view in propagating the human race.

A paper published some years ago by the late Mr. Cline having exercised a pernicious influence, it is necessary here to refer to it. He wished to show what he considered to be the advantage obtainable by breeding from large females. He had horses and cattle principally in view, and thus writes:—"The proper method of improving the form of animals consists in selecting a well-formed female *proportionably larger* than the male. The im-

provement depends on this principle, that the power of the female to supply her offspring with nourishment is in proportion to her size, and to the power of nourishing herself from the excellence of the constitution.

“The size of the fœtus is generally in proportion to that of the male parent, and therefore when the female parent is proportionably small the quantity of nourishment is deficient, and her offspring has all the disproportions of a starveling. But when the female, from her size and good constitution, is more than adequate to the nourishment of a fœtus of a smaller male than herself, the growth must be proportionably greater. The larger female has also a greater quantity of milk, and her offspring is more abundantly supplied with nourishment.”

There can be no doubt that in breeding animals of any kind the females should be well formed, and have good constitutions; but on what facts Mr. Cline grounds his assertion that the females for breeding should be larger than the males, he does not say, while all the facts bearing on this subject lead to an oppo-

site conclusion. No cattle are probably so hardy as the Scotch; none have more vigour, none are better formed, and few so well; yet they yield little milk, but this of such good quality that the offspring of those cows are well nourished, yet the cows are not "in proportion larger than the males."

Then I have showed on good authority how careful are the breeders of our Hereford and Devon cattle to keep down the size of their cows, and that the result of their doing so is that the oxen of this race are the finest in the world, being equally well constituted for the yoke and for the butcher. These cows do not yield much milk, but the quality is excellent; and it is this and not the quantity of milk which is important to the offspring.

It is well known to every man practically acquainted with the subject, that the large cows kept in our dairy counties are much less hardy than the Scotch, the Welch, the Devons, or the Herefords; but the former yield much more milk, which is the object of the dairy farmer to obtain.

Then what are more vigorous than the mares

yet found in a state of nature, or in one but little removed from it? When one of these is put to a large horse is the produce ill nourished? is it a starveling? No; the only fear of a judicious and experienced breeder in this case is, that the produce of this cross, when well fed, after being weaned, may turn out too large. But when I speak of small cows and small mares, let me not be supposed to refer to weedy or weak females, having shallow bodies and weak loins. I allude only to well-formed, strong, and compact mares, showing by their forms that they have vigorous constitutions. I further submit that in no race of animals in a state of nature, or nearly so, are the females larger than the males.

As respects the human race, we do not find that large women produce the finest offspring. On the contrary, such females have usually less vigorous constitutions than smaller ones, when these have well-proportioned forms. It is equally well known that very tall men are not so enduring under exertion, or so likely to live to a great age as smaller men.

If, in breeding horses, we were to select mares

of larger stature proportionably than the stallions, we should invert the clearest order of nature, for naturally females are smaller than the males.

It is certain, that in enlarging the natural size of both cattle and horses, we do not *pari passu* increase the natural amount of nervous, or, if I may use the expression, vital power. Dr. Holland, in his work on Mental Physiology, says in the chapter entitled, "Inquiry into the Nervous System," "Other arguments, in addition, might be used to sanction the idea of quantity in the nervous power as expressed by its deficiency. May we not under this view find the explanation of the great exhaustion (sometimes involving dangerous results) which follows sudden or *excessive* growth of the body? regarding such debility as the effect of disproportion between the size of the frame, and the amount of nervous force ministering to its functions." On this passage Dr. Holland adds the following note:—"In such cases, however, we are bound to advert also to the want of proportionate growth in the muscular structure of the heart, and its conse-

quent inability to carry on an active and healthy circulation through a vascular system thus unduly extended. I have seen some very striking examples of this disproportion ; and it is a point in pathology meriting more attention than it has received."

How many facts illustrate this doctrine in respect to both men and horses. Persons of experience in horses which have to work hard daily, either in harness or in the saddle, are agreed on the unfitness of large horses for severe work. A large soldier may beat down one of much lower stature, but in making long marches, and submitting to privations the smaller men beat the larger. It is the same in horses. Heavy dragoon soldiers require horses having great physical power, but these horses cannot compete with the light Cossack and Hungarian horses in bearing long marches and privations, but these in the actual charge have not sufficient weight to oppose horses of greater physical power. Here then, again, we see the wisdom of those who breed our fine Hereford and Devon cattle, who keep down the size of their cows in order to maintain the vigour of their constitution, knowing

that those of their progeny, which are not allowed to perpetuate their race, will, under this system, arrive at a large size, and this without their activity in the yoke being lessened.

CHAPTER VI.

Our Cavalry ~~horses~~ to be tested during peace, and its discipline improved.

SEEING that our cavalry horses have become deteriorated since the last war, while in that they displayed much delicacy and perished in consequence in great numbers, we should while peace continues, subject our present cavalry horses to a practical test calculated to prove which class can and which cannot be depended on for carrying their riders fully equipped through a campaign. I am glad to hear that our cavalry is about to be encamped, but regret to learn that their horses are to be covered in when at the picket-post. If this expense has now become necessary, what clearer evidence is needed to show how much our horses have fallen off in constitutional vigour, seeing

that till now they were always when encamped tied to the picket-post in the open air, and this without sustaining the smallest injury? Surely this encampment is an occasion which should not be neglected for trying how our horses are likely to go through a campaign with their riders fully equipped for the field. The last encampment in England was near Weymouth in 1805, and as I was in it I am able to say that, though the horses were tied to the picket-post in the open air, they were in the finest condition.

Advantage should be taken of the coming encampment for further testing our cavalry horses by marching them daily, when not otherwise employed, for a month, a considerable number of miles. We test our cannon and our muskets before using them in war, and if this be a wise precaution, it is not less so after a very long peace to test our cavalry horses before we enter upon war, particularly now when they appear much more delicate, and much less able to carry the great weight of fully equipped soldiers than were their predecessors in the last war.

The number of miles to be marched each

day in the trial here recommended should be rather more than is likely to be required in a campaign, seeing that our horses at home are better fed than in a campaign.

This trial would serve to clear up another point now little understood yet of great importance—that of ascertaining the best means of preventing or greatly diminishing the serious evil of sore backs amongst the horses by unequal pressure of the saddle.

General Cathcart, when in Canada, in order to prevent this had a quarter blanket placed under the saddles of his regiment, and this with very good effect; but on that regiment coming home the blanket was ordered to be discontinued on the sole ground of unsightliness without any trial being made of it. This is to be regretted, seeing who was the author of that system, and that it had answered in Canada, while we remain, down to the present day, without any plan for preventing our horses' backs becoming sore when having to travel for only a few consecutive days.

The Life Guards, in Spain, had a large portion of their men dismounted while only marching up the country to join our army, by

the horses' backs becoming sore ; and a few years afterwards the 1st Life Guards in marching the short distance between London and Nottingham, suffered much, with the exception of one troop, by their horses' backs becoming sore. The troop which escaped this malady did so from unusual care being exercised by its captain, a proof that this subject requires elucidation by a trial of marching under different plans of management. Looking at the enormous expense of this force, no pains should be spared calculated to prevent this evil.

By the trial here recommended—if properly carried out—important knowledge would be acquired of the causes which produce sore backs, as well as the best means of either wholly getting rid of that evil, or diminishing it.

But how different would be now our situation if a few years ago Government had tried some crosses with well selected Arab horses to improve our cavalry. If that experiment had been made, even on a very small scale, we should by trying now the produce against our present horses at the picket-post, and by long

daily marches have acquired a body of facts of much importance to our army.

The question of arming the front rank men in our dragoon regiments with lances deserves attention. It might be well to appoint a military commission to investigate the subject, but be the opinion of such a body what it might, a partial trial of this system should be directly adopted.

The great improvements effected of late years in the Continental cavalry—particularly in that of France—is an additional call upon us to examine attentively the present state of our own.

Our cavalry is brave, but becomes in action unmanageable. This is a serious fault, and led at Waterloo to the almost entire destruction of our heavy cavalry. This defect can only be remedied by an improved system of discipline. For this purpose much more attention should be paid to troop drills.

The discipline of our cavalry regiments should cease to be, as at present, dependent wholly on the officers commanding regiments, assisted by the adjutant and riding-master. By calling on the captains to drill their troops, a

spirit of emulation would spring up amongst those officers now unknown. The improvement resulting from this system might be slow, and confined, perhaps, at first, to one troop, then gradually to others, while one or two might not improve at all. The captains commanding these last should be first encouraged to do better, and reprimanded if the evil arose from their want of will. From whatever cause the inferior discipline of a troop might arise, it must not be allowed to continue, though it should become necessary for its captain to leave a service for which he had shown himself unfit. There would be no cruelty in this when we reflect on the fatal consequences which so often result when cavalry display a want of discipline in action.

The dragoons, when exercised in troop drills, should move with very wide intervals between each horse. Persons who understand riding, and have seen much of our riding-schools, know that they never turn out a good horseman ; and the principal reason for this is, the confined space of a school. But troops are in a school when out of doors, unless made to move with wide intervals. Dragoons cannot maintain

accurately proper intervals between each other until they have acquired a skill in horsemanship not obtainable under the present system.

These drills, if well carried out, would show which of the captains of troops knew how to command them, and this would not be lost on the soldiers, who estimate very accurately the amount of military knowledge their officers possess. This knowledge on the part of the men leads in cavalry to much good, or to great mischief, according as the officers do, or do not know their duties. When the men have confidence in the knowledge of their officers, they yield them ready obedience in any situation, but not so when the officers do not merit their confidence.

It is of little use to bring a whole regiment of cavalry together for a field-day, until they have been prepared for it by well conducted troop drills.

The junior field officers, as well as two or three of the older captains in every cavalry regiment, should each be occasionally allowed, under the eye of the officer commanding the regiment, to put it through some movements. After this practice had been established, the

inspector-general should sometimes call out one of these officers, to put his regiment through some movements; and if this officer failed to do this properly, he should be allowed a reasonable time for improvement; after which, if he still failed to perform this very easy task with perfect facility, he should be reported by the inspector-general to the Horse Guards, whose painful but indispensable duty it would be to remove such officer from the service. This may seem harsh, but not so when it is recollected how many valuable lives may be sacrificed, and how many occasions for snatching an advantage lost, when an officer commanding a cavalry regiment cannot perform his duty properly when before an enemy.

It is very desirable to have the older officers in a cavalry regiment well looked after by the inspector-general, who, from his rank, and other circumstances, would have more influence over such officers than the lieutenant-colonel, who, living on a more or less intimate footing with them, is less disposed to exercise that strictness which the interests of the service require. While living in social intercourse with a corps of officers, it is very difficult for the

commanding officer to be sufficiently strict, while this duty is very easy of performance to the inspector-general of such force. When this person calls on a junior officer to put his regiment through some movements, these should be named by him, as little instruction would be obtained by these officers putting their regiments through movements before a reviewing or inspecting general which they had been previously practising for the occasion.

The same principle should be extended to every inspection of a regiment, whoever may be in the command of it; for after a cavalry regiment has been properly instructed, first in the riding-school, and afterwards in troop drills, it ought to be able to perform well any movements that could be required from it without a previous preparation.

When an officer at the head of a regiment of cavalry cannot act rapidly, or on the spur of the moment, before an enemy, he may wholly lose a fine opportunity for striking an important blow.

It is then injurious to allow the officers who command our cavalry regiments to prepare themselves for a reviewing, or inspecting

general, by performing before him movements previously practised expressly for the occasion. If an officer commanding a cavalry regiment require more than a momentary glance at an enemy for attacking him, he is not fit for that arm of the service.

Our cavalry regiments should not on their field days be allowed to dwell so much as they usually do between their movements. Two of these should be made in rapid succession, in order to accustom the non-commissioned officers to take up the new lines rapidly. When the commanding officer on a field-day dwells long between every movement, the attention of both officers and men becomes wearied. If a cavalry regiment cannot perform its movements rapidly, without getting into more or less of confusion, either its troop or its regimental drills have been neglected. When a general then arrives before a cavalry regiment to review it, he should name the movements he wishes to have performed, instead of being content to accept those which had been previously practised for the occasion.

In the course of the last war I knew some junior field officers of cavalry regiments, who,

though of long standing in the service, could not put their regiments through a common field-day without the continual aid of the adjutants. Had this occurred in battle the result would have been serious. Such officers should have been dismissed, or made to learn their duty.

A thoroughly well instructed, and well mounted cavalry regiment, may be compared to a fine frigate with a highly disciplined crew.

A cavalry officer in the command of a regiment may on service greatly distinguish himself, as may a captain in command only of a squadron when this happens to be detached.

There are still men in our Household Cavalry much too heavy for service. The horses required to carry them are necessarily too low-bred and too slow. They are, in consequence, when in a column on its march, like to slow sailing ships, which delay the progress of a whole fleet. The speed of a cavalry regiment is in all its movements diminished, by the slow horses which carry the heaviest men. These

men may be very showy, but if their limbs were shorter, their chests wider, and their arms stronger, they would be more effective in action, while pressing less on the power of their horses.

The form of the men in our Household Cavalry should resemble more that of the men in our Grenadier Guards, which is for the most part perfect.

We ought not to enlist or retain, even in our heavy cavalry, men of more than five feet eleven inches; yet, we have still men in that force, particularly amongst the sergeants, who, besides being very tall, are also very heavy, and too much so for any horse of proper breeding to carry. I doubt not, these men, and particularly the sergeants, are very deserving, but actual service should ever be before the eyes of our military authorities.

It is the long limbs of the men in our Household Cavalry which make them, when on foot, look so tall; but when mounted, they look less tall than men formed like those in our Grenadier Guards would do if they were placed on horseback; while these have broader chests, and stronger arms than the very tall men now to be seen in our Household Cavalry.

CHAPTER VII.

INFANTRY.

A system should be established for bringing forward talented officers in this force.

THE case of infantry differs much from that of cavalry, its movements being comparatively slow, and performed by rational beings instead of mere animals. An officer in a line regiment of infantry has scarcely ever an opportunity, till he becomes a lieutenant-colonel, and then few, of distinguishing himself. The duties of all other officers in that force are so simple, as to be at once understood by persons of the most limited capacity. From this branch of the service, however, nearly all the generals are obtained, and with scarcely an exception, as respects such as obtain the command of armies, while their success in that important situation

has little relation to any knowledge they have acquired of regimental duties. Even the scientific education given to Artillery and Engineer officers does not enable them to command armies, unless they possess that natural genius for war which education, however good, does not give.

At present, in consequence of the great success of our armies under the Duke of Wellington, it seems to be a pretty general opinion that our military system is good, and may be relied on for ensuring the success of our arms in a future war. But what is the fact? Why that, until the Duke of Wellington obtained the command of our armies, they have been, from the time of Marlborough, almost uniformly unsuccessful, save in India, where the native armies were, with hardly any exception, very feeble. The immediate cause of the ill success of our armies before the Duke of Wellington appeared, is their having been usually placed under incompetent commanders, as happened in the war for independence in America, and by the placing such men as General Whitelock, Lord Chatham, Sir John Murray, and several others, at the head of our armies in the field.

These men disgraced themselves and our arms. Four or five generals were placed in quick succession at the head of our expedition to Portugal in the last war, and were all as quickly recalled. Then how ill was the army commanded we sent to America in 1814! Can we then believe that a system under which such events occurred can be sound?

The state of the army we sent to Germany at the commencement of the last war was disgraceful. Its outposts, when before the enemy, were not visited by the general officers on duty, and head-quarters was every night a scene of drunkenness, while the soldiers were without discipline. This statement rests on no less authority than that of the Duke of Wellington. Until he was placed at the head of our armies in the field, they had rarely any success. But how did he, while young, arrive at so high a station? Was it by the force of his talents? No. By his great interest—by the instrumentality of his brother, Lord Wellesley, Governor-General of India, when the then Colonel Wellesley arrived in that country, where he was quickly placed at the head of an army, in which post he had brilliant success.

It may be said that this case makes in favour of patronage. It would be unwise to come to such a conclusion on account of a solitary case. It is, on the contrary, melancholy to reflect, that had the Duke of Wellington not been the brother of the Governor-General of India, but an officer without interest, he would, in all probability, notwithstanding his great military talents, have been compelled to remain the best part of his life performing the simple duties of an officer in a line regiment of infantry.

It will probably be very long before so able a general appears again ; but whenever this country shall possess an officer having much more than the average amount of military talents, there should be no chance of his not becoming early known to the commander-in-chief, and by him quickly afterwards brought forward in his profession.

The great mass of our officers must, under any system, be content to remain the best part of their lives doing duty with their regiments, and so long as they continue what they have hitherto ever been — distinguished for their bravery and honour — we ought to be well

satisfied, seeing how well they perform the duties assigned to them.

The situation of our staff officers — that part of them below the rank of general — is very different, having to perform in a campaign important, as well as instructive duties. Thus being mounted when in the field, they are sent about in every direction—particularly those on the staff of the general commanding the army—and become, in consequence, acquainted with the whole of the ground on which the army they are attached to in a campaign moves, as well as the spots on which its battles are fought. In carrying and explaining the orders which, from time to time, they receive in the course of a campaign, they may, when talented, distinguish themselves by important services. Thus, at Albuera, it is well known, Lord Hardinge, then on the staff, saved that battle by two suggestions he addressed in the midst of the fight to Lord Beresford. This of itself would suffice to show the importance of having our staff officers selected wholly on account of their talents. But what is the fact? Why that the officers on the staff of our generals are uniformly selected on account of their

connections, and never on account of their talents.

The situation of an officer in a campaign doing duty with his regiment is very different, as he can see little beyond the ground it occupies, and does not come in contact with the general officers.

The public believes that much talent is not required by officers of the army, which is true as respects infantry officers doing duty with their regiments during the best part of their lives, but it is impossible to read the "Dispatches" without feeling assured that no position is more difficult than that of an officer in command of an army in the field; and that to be long successful in that situation, he must combine much natural genius for war, with an almost unerring judgment. But such talents, however great, require to be exercised before they become impaired, either by age or by a too long course of idleness.

What would now be the condition of all difficult professions, trades, and arts, if those who entered them, and were clever, relied for their success on their connections rather than on their talents? Would such a system make

profound lawyers, clever surgeons, superior manufacturers, or accomplished artists? The reply must be, No. How, then, can we expect to be usually supplied with officers fitted to command successfully an army in the field, while they look to getting on in their profession solely either to their money or their connections? Until we place talented officers in the situation of talented men in other difficult professions, by giving them a sufficient motive for exertion, they will not exert or improve themselves.

We should then adopt a system, which shall early make known to the commander-in-chief—even in a period of peace—those officers who possess much more than the average amount of military talents; but this point being accomplished, such officers must know, that after studying the higher parts of their profession with success, they will obtain an adequate reward.

This change in our military system was never more loudly called for than at present, after a peace of nearly forty years duration on the grand theatre of war, leaving us without a general who has had the command of an army,

a division, or even a brigade in the last European war, while young enough now to go through the fatigues of a campaign.

Our present Commander-in-Chief is sufficiently talented and experienced, whilst sufficiently active to command an army in the field, but he is getting old.

In the absence of any plan for carrying out this alteration in our system of military policy, I submit that the Commander-in-Chief should invite officers to send to the Horse Guards their opinions in writing on certain military questions. These to be named, and their nature briefly explained in letters sent to the officers commanding regiments in Great Britain, to be by them communicated to the officers under their command. Henceforth, I shall call these opinions reports, and I use the word *invite*, because to command in this case would be improper, seeing how very few officers in any army are calculated to discuss great military questions who are yet excellent executive, or regimental officers. The invitation should be addressed only to officers who have attained the rank of captain and of not less than two years' standing. Younger officers, when

talented would not remain in the meantime idle, but would be preparing themselves for the period when they would be allowed to send in their reports. In the meantime it would not be desirable to bring them into competition with older officers, because while the former might fail only from being too young they might succeed at a maturer age, if not disgusted with their want of success at an earlier period.

A board consisting of two well selected officers, should be formed whose duty would be to peruse the reports sent to the Horse Guards, laying those only before the Commander-in-Chief which had merit, and when the two officers forming the board, differed in opinion on a report, they should refer it to the Commander-in-Chief for his decision. It would doubtless save trouble to have the board consist of three instead of two officers, but it would be easier to obtain two officers than three calculated for such a duty.

As a commencement, a supposed invasion from the opposite coast would form a good subject for discussion in these reports. The practicability of effecting a landing, being more

a naval than a military question, these reports should commence by supposing the debarkation of a hostile army effected on certain parts of our coasts, pointing out the best spots between the places of debarkation and the metropolis for making a succession of stands against the progress of the enemy and pointing out the best spots for throwing up entrenchments.

Diagrams should not be required in these reports; when wanted, engineer officers are the persons to supply them, and not the commander of an army.

All that is wanted in the reports here contemplated is unmistakeable evidence of strategic genius, allied with striking good sense.

As our coasts offer many spots calculated for a debarkation, each of these would afford matter for a separate report. The Commander-in-Chief after receiving from the officers commanding regiments the names of their officers who accepted the invitation to send in reports, should appoint a time for a certain number of them to proceed to the coast, allowing them ten days for observation and drawing up their first reports, which should, at the end of

that period, be sent into the Horse Guards. Each officer whose first report was there approved, should be invited to send in a second, being allowed only seven days for composing this. An officer whose second report was approved should be invited to send in a third, five days only being allowed for this purpose. These reports should refer exclusively to defending the route from three separate spots on our coasts, on which the debarkation of an enemy was supposed to have taken place. The officers whose reports were approved should now be each invited to make one on the defence of London in the supposed event of an enemy succeeding in reaching that place.

Reports should be invited from the officers quartered in Ireland, on a supposed invasion of that country on the spots naval men have judged best calculated for a successful descent. This duty should be executed on the same plan as has been here sketched out for England.

After this, the Commander-in-Chief might send those officers to Ireland whose reports in England had been approved, inviting them to send similar reports on a supposed invasion of the former country. Then the officers quar-

tered in Ireland whose reports on a supposed invasion of that country had been approved might be directed to come to England, and send in similar reports on a supposed invasion of that country.

In the commencement of this plan a great mass of worthless reports would doubtless be sent in, the result of vanity rather than talent; but if only one first-rate report was received in the course of a dozen years, how great might become its value by making the Commander-in-Chief early acquainted with the writer.

The reports received at the Horse Guards from our officers in their several expeditions should remain the exclusive property of the nation, and be divided into three classes. The first should be for the reception of reports which displayed an unusually great amount of merit. The writer of such should be rewarded by immediate promotion, and placed in a high staff situation the moment it became vacant. His advancement in rank should be rapid, not only as a proper reward to the officer, but as being of much advantage to the nation to obtain early the greatest services which increased rank enables a talented officer to render to his

country. We must bear in mind that talented officers are as little disposed to exchange a life of indolence and pleasure for one of much mental exertion, as are the rest of the profession unless an adequate reward be held out.

It might happen that no reports were received for some years, the merit of which was so superior to the rest as to deserve being placed in the first class. The reports placed in the second class, should display decisive merit, though much less than one entitled to be placed in the first.

The third class should be for the reception of reports not wholly without talent, but without enough to be placed in the second class. To the writers of these inferior reports further time should be granted for further exertion ; but if, after waiting a reasonable period, the reports of these officers did not become sufficiently improved for placing in the second class, the writers should be informed that further reports from them would be dispensed with.

It will here be said that filling the staff situations with officers selected solely on account of their talents, as displayed in their reports, would deprive general officers of their present

patronage; yes, but only to confer an inestimable benefit on their country by placing early on our staff precisely the officers best calculated to perform its duties.

The next and last step should be to send such of the officers, whose reports were satisfactory, to Spain, under the orders of a general officer, accompanied by an able artillery and an able engineer officer; the three having served under the Duke of Wellington in that country.

The object of this expedition, in the first instance, would be to show these officers the districts which were the scenes of the Duke of Wellington's campaigns. The movements which had preceded every battle should be carefully pointed out to these officers, and should be by them as carefully considered as everything afterwards connected with the battles.

It must be desirable to show young officers who have had no experience in war, how our armies were distributed in different fields of battle, by such a general as the Duke of Wellington. In the absence of such instruction, as well as of experience in actual warfare,

nothing can be more difficult on a field of battle, offering striking varieties of ground, than to occupy it well. Thus, to give in the course of a campaign, or in a great battle, a sufficient lateral extension to an army, without too much weakening its communications, is a class of knowledge which cannot be taught by books.

Having then selected the best officers for affording instruction, as well as the best for profiting by it, we should have done everything in our power for securing a supply of officers during the continuance of peace, fitted to command our armies in the field when war shall arrive.

The officers sent to Spain would of course consult carefully the "Dispatches," and General Napier's work.

Strategy is one of those arts which is not wholly directed by what are called general principles. Doubtless there are such in war which should, in the great majority of cases, be kept in view, but great commanders are found occasionally to neglect them, and with advantage. If it were otherwise, the art of war, or the business of a general commanding an army in the field, might be wholly

taught by books, like geometry and arithmetic. This reminds me, that on its being mentioned to the Duke of Wellington, that Bonaparte, while only a general commanding an army, had declined to give the then Government of France a plan of his intended campaign in Italy, before he left Paris, observed that Bonaparte was right, as no general could determine his plan of a campaign till he had surveyed the district likely to be occupied.

This it is which renders going over a country which has been the seat of war carried on by a great commander so pre-eminently useful. A young officer there sees the situations where what are called general principles were attended to, and where they were neglected.

As an illustration of my opinion, that a visit to the districts where a war has been carried on is desirable, I beg the reader's attention to the terms, strong and weak, as applied to military positions—terms necessarily in constant use in all military works, and yet perfectly vague, and practically unintelligible to officers who have not seen service, or been in peace instructed in the manner here pointed out. Doubtless every man capable of thinking, will

satisfy himself that an open plain is indefensible for an army deficient in cavalry and artillery, but the positions I am now referring to, displaying a much less decisive character, require, in consequence, a practical military eye, to be properly appreciated. An officer, therefore, without experience in real warfare, and without that practice in peace here recommended, cannot, by reading alone, become a judge of the relative strength of military positions. So long as he remains in this ignorance he is unfit to command an army.

In the absence of war, there is nothing so well calculated to mitigate this painful ignorance, as a visit to countries which have been the scenes of war, accompanied by well selected officers who were actors in it. By this plan, the experience of one generation of officers may be handed down to every succeeding one, and may be thus continued to the end of time, or to that of the British Empire.

If this plan should be thought worthy of a trial, it should soon be made, so rapidly are the officers who served in the Peninsula passing away. Waterloo should be visited, and the grounds well considered on which the actions

of the 16th and 18th of June were fought. As a finish to the instruction of these officers, it might be well on their return to England, to show them two or three districts calculated for a campaign, inviting each of them to send in two reports—one on the course an invading army should take, and another showing the course a defending army should follow—allowing twelve hours only for drawing up each. This would show what officers were most ready in taking up military positions.

Under this system, no military man possessing more than usual abilities for war, could long remain unknown to the Commander-in-Chief, thus putting an end to our present system, under which the most and the least talented officers are placed and retained in the same category.

When the next war shall arrive, and we look at an army about to leave our shores, well appointed and well disciplined, it would be sad to feel, that while its success against the enemy will depend almost wholly on the talents of its commander, these are lamentably insufficient. Yet how often have we not sent out fine armies, which failed

because placed under incompetent commanders? and if nothing in the meantime be done to prevent this, it will occur again and again.

Doubtless under our present system, when a clever officer in a time of war does happen to get placed on the staff, he has a good chance of rising high in his profession. What I complain of under this system is, that though a clever officer may get on the staff, he does so not on account of his fitness, but on account of his connections.

Such a system may be approved by those who profit by it, but to the nation it is very mischievous.

No system can be devised calculated to measure with absolute exactitude the extent of an officer's genius for war which stops short of placing him at the head of an army in the field, but it is not on that account less desirable to know all that is ascertainable of an officer's fitness for such an important post before he is placed in it.

The knowledge which the system here recommended requires in officers who are to fill high military posts, differs wholly from the

knowledge obtained in schools. The object of the system here recommended is first to find out the officers who possess the necessary talents for war, allied with a sound judgment, and then to excite those talents into healthy action. This is I submit a sound system, while one which orders all officers to acquire the scientific education which artillery and engineer officers obtain and require, will break down; as only a very limited number of youths possess the natural talents required to insure success in those branches of the profession. It would then be not only useless, but cruel to order the great mass of our officers to send to headquarters reports or opinions on difficult but important military subjects which they cannot grasp, yet they may be excellent regimental or executive officers. But to invite officers to send in their opinions on difficult subjects would be unobjectionable.

A great army is rarely found wanting in officers who have enjoyed and profited by a scientific education, but those persons are rarely found capable of commanding an army in the field, because to do this successfully an officer requires that which no education gives—namely,

a great natural genius for war or strategy, allied with an almost unerring judgment.

The "Dispatches" show clearly what the talents are which the commander of an army in the field requires. The Duke was not a man of science, but his talents were those most wanted but rarely found.

The only difficulty which the system here recommended might have to grapple with, would be that of finding officers possessing sufficient military knowledge to form a good board for examining the reports. We must not, however, forget that an officer may be able to judge pretty correctly a military report, who could not write a good one ; just as a man may be a competent judge of poetry without being a poet, or a good judge of the arts without being an artist.

None of the reports should be signed by the writers, but each should be accompanied by a note stating the writer's name, and affirming, on his honour, that no one had assisted him in drawing it up.

A confidential person in the Horse Guards should collect all the reports sent into that office, numbering them in a book, with the writer's name annexed to each number. Then

the reports should be handed to the board with the numbers only annexed without the names of the writers. This book should be seen only by the person who had charge of it and the Commander-in-Chief. This last plan would be useful, not from an apprehension that the judgment of the board would be improperly influenced, but because disappointed candidates, being usually indisposed to concur in an unfavourable judgment on their works, are apt to fancy that their successful competitors are unduly favoured.

The plan here recommended, to be fairly judged, must be contrasted with the existing system under which generals are placed at the head of armies in the field, with whose fitness for such a situation, those who place them in it are too often wholly ignorant. Thus individual members of our civil government have frequently appointed officers to command our armies without reference to the Commander-in-Chief who was, sad to say, a cypher. If we are not prepared to see this state of things return, we must render the military profession one which clever men, without interest, shall henceforth be disposed to enter.

Our object should be to place such officers, as much as possible, in the situation of talented men in other professions, these being early excited to exertion by a well grounded expectation that they shall in time reap an adequate reward.

It is to be regretted that so large a portion of our army is always serving in our colonies, as it goes to delay the operation of almost any plan calculated to improve it. For this evil, however, patience is our only resource.

If the plan here recommended for trial be not the remedy required, no time should be lost in devising a better, for the country may be assured that our present military system is bad, a fact which may one day signalize itself, by the loss of a great battle and a fine army. I say a great battle, because, when we again go to war, it should be on a scale proportioned to our means for carrying it on, and those are now become very large. The excellence of our soldiers is such, that with a proper officer always available to command them when in the field, we should have little to fear from a conflict with any nation in the world. We should then not need to advance the large

sums we have done to other nations for their assistance in previous wars, obtaining usually a very small return.

If no better plan suggest itself than that here proposed for getting our armies well commanded when in the field, aided by a competent staff, it is surely worth while to give this a fair trial, as by doing so no expense worth naming would be incurred.

The improper interference of our civil government with the Commander-in-Chief in a time of war should not be again practised. We lost very many men at Waterloo on account of our want of guns, yet the Duke of Wellington had written sufficiently early to the government to state the number he required. Then, instead of allowing the Duke to select his own staff for that campaign from amongst the officers he had known in Spain, they sent him young ones, with whom he was wholly unacquainted. He remonstrated on both these subjects, but to no purpose. He says, in one of his letters to government, "It is quite impossible for me to superintend the details of the duties of these departments myself, having already more to arrange than I am equal to ;

and I cannot entrust them to the young gentlemen on the staff of this army. *Indeed I may say I do not know how to employ them.*" If our government could so conduct itself towards so powerful and able a commander as the Duke of Wellington, it is clear that a military system under which such things could happen, is a dangerous one, and if in the next European war we send, as we ought, a large British army on the continent, it may, by failing, endanger our national independence.

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